



Part I. Proposed Action Description

- 1. Type of Proposed State Action**
- 2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action**

Owner: MT Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation; Sec. 85-1-210, 85-1-211, 85-6-109 (5) (1997) MCA.

3. **Name of Project** Winnett Wells Property Transfer (Project #268)
4. **Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)**

MT. Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, 48 N. Last Chance Gulch, P.O. Box 201601, Helena,
MT 59620 – 1601 (406) 444-6646

5. If Applicable: Estimated Construction/Commencement Date Spring, 2001
Estimated Completion Date Spring, 2001
Current Status of Project Design (% complete) N/A %

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

- 6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)**

MAR 02 2001

Petroleum County – Township 14N, Range 2E, NE ¼ Section 8

**MONTANA STATE LIBRARY.
1515 E. 6th AVE.
HELENA, MONTANA 59620**

7. **Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**
- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------|
| (a) | Developed: | (c) | Floodplain..... <u>acres</u> |
| | Residential <u>acres</u> | | |
| | Industrial..... <u>acres</u> | (d) | Productive: |
| | Open Space/ | | Irrigated cropland <u>acres</u> |
| | Woodlands / | | Dry cropland <u>acres</u> |
| | Recreation..... <u>acres</u> | | Forestry..... <u>acres</u> |
| | | | Rangeland..... <u>1.03 acres</u> |
| (b) | Wetlands/Riparian | | |
| | Areas <u>acres</u> | (e) | Other: <u>acres</u> |

Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

pographic map and map of section 8 attached.

[illegible]

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| | | | Rangeland..... <u>1.03 acres</u> |
| (b) | Wetlands/Riparian | | |
| | Areas acres | (e) | Other: <u>acres</u> |

8. Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

Topographic map and map of section 8 attached.

[illegible]

9. Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.

The proposed action calls for the transfer of 1.03 acres of MT DNRC State Water Projects Bureau property to a surrounding landowner. The property is located in Petroleum County, approximately two miles southeast of the Town of Winnett, Montana, located in the NE ¼ of Section 8, Township 14 North, Range 27 East. The property consists entirely of rangeland.

The property was purchased by the State Water Conservation Board in 1935 for drilling two water wells. The wells were drilled to provide water for the establishment of a CCC camp, and to serve as an auxiliary system for the Town of Winnett's existing water supply. Two wells were drilled in 1938 and piping was installed to connect the auxiliary system to the town's main water supply. The production of the wells began to decline in 1939 and the auxiliary system and wells were abandoned. The State Water Conservation Board invested \$2,532.20 in the project, including the purchase of the 1.03 acres.

The property is currently surrounded by a single landowner, Mr. Vince Murion of Winnett, and does not generate any revenue for the State. The proposed transfer would take place in the spring of 2001 via quit claim deed.

State involvement in Winnett Wells Project no longer provides public benefits. The transfer of properties such as the Winnett Wells Project into private ownership absolves the State of any liability associated with the project and reduces the State's administrative duties.

10. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
State Historic Preservation Office	Cultural Clearance	pending

10. (Continued)

(b) Funding:

Agency Name Funding Amount

N/A

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name Type of Responsibility

N/A

11. List of Agencies Consulted during Preparation of the EA:

MT Natural Heritage Program

State Historic Preservation Office

Part II. Environmental Checklist Review

1. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

IMPACTS					
Unknown *	No Significant Impacts	Minor Impacts*	Potentially Significant Impacts*	Can Impacts be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	X				
	X				
	X				
	X				
	X				

**PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT**
(Continued)

IMPACTS

Unknown*	No Significant Impacts	Minor Impacts*	Potentially Significant Impacts*	Can Impacts be Mitigated*	Comment Index
2. <u>AIR</u>					
Will the proposed action result in:					
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality?	X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?	X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?	X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?	X				
e. Other: _____					

**PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT**

IMPACTS

Unknown*	No Significant Impact	Minor Impacts*	Potentially Significant Impacts*	Can Impacts be Mitigated*	Comment Index
<p>3. WATER</p> <p>Will the proposed action result in:</p> <p>a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?</p> <p>b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?</p> <p>c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?</p> <p>d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?</p> <p>e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?</p> <p>f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?</p> <p>g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?</p> <p>h. Increase in the risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?</p> <p>i. Violation of the Montana Non-Degradation Statute?</p> <p>j. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?</p> <p>k. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?</p> <p>l. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>				

**PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT**
(Continued)

IMPACTS

Unknown*	No Significant Impacts	Minor Impacts*	Potentially Significant Impacts*	Can Impacts be mitigated*	Comment Index
<p>4. <u>VEGETATION</u></p> <p>Will the proposed action result in:</p> <p>a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?</p> <p>b. Alteration of a plant community?</p> <p>c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered plant species?</p> <p>d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?</p> <p>e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?</p> <p>f. Other: _____</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>				<p>4c</p> <p>4e</p>

4c.) A file search conducted by the Montana Natural Heritage Program indicated that no threatened, endangered, or species of special concern are known to exist in the project area.

4e.) The new property owner would assume all weed control responsibilities.

**PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT**
(Continued)

IMPACTS

Unknown*	No Significant Impacts	Minor Impacts*	Potentially Significant Impacts*	Can Impacts be Mitigated*	Comment Index
5. FISH/WILDLIFE					
Will the proposed action result in:					
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?	X				5a
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?	X				5b
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?	X				5c
d. Introduction of new species into an area?	X				5d
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?	X				5e
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?	X				5f
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?	X				5g
h. Other: _____					

5a-e,g) Comments received from MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks and/or the U.S. F&W Service would be used to verify the no significant impact assumption and included in the final EA and notice of decision. It is anticipated that the land use (range) will not significantly change as a result of this transfer, resulting in no significant impacts to wildlife resources.

5f.) A file search conducted by the Montana Natural Heritage program indicated no threatened endangered or species of special concern are known to exist in the area.

**2. HUMAN
ENVIRONMENT**

IMPACTS

Unknown*	No Significant Impacts	Minor Impacts*	Potentially Significant Impacts*	Can Impacts be Mitigated*	Comment Index
<p>6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u></p> <p>Will the proposed action result in:</p> <p>a. Increases in existing noise levels?</p> <p>b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?</p> <p>c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?</p> <p>d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?</p> <p>e. Other: _____</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>				

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT
(Continued)

IMPACTS

Unknown*	No Significant Impacts	Minor Impacts*	Potentially Significant Impacts*	Can Impacts be Mitigated*	Comment Index
7. <u>LAND USE</u>					
Will the proposed action result in:					
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?	X				
b. Conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?	X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?	X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?	X				
e. Other: _____					

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT
(Continued)

IMPACTS

Unknown*	No Significant Impacts	Minor Impacts*	Potentially Significant Impacts*	Can Impacts be Mitigated*	Comment Index
<p>8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u></p> <p>Will the proposed action result in:</p> <p>a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?</p> <p>b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?</p> <p>c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?</p> <p>d. Other: _____</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>				

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT
(Continued)

IMPACTS

Unknown*	No Significant Impacts	Minor Impacts*	Potentially Significant Impacts*	Can Impacts be Mitigated*	Comment Index
<p>9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACTS</u></p> <p>Will the proposed action result in:</p> <p>a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?</p> <p>b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?</p> <p>c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?</p> <p>d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?</p> <p>e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?</p> <p>f. Other: _____</p>	X				
	X				
	X				
	X				
	X				

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT
(Continued)

IMPACTS

Unknown*	No Significant Impacts	Minor Impacts*	Potentially Significant Impacts*	Can Impacts be Mitigated*	Comment Index
<p>10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/ TAXES/UTILITIES</u></p> <p>Will the proposed action:</p> <p>a. Have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:</p> <p>b. Have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?</p> <p>c. Result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?</p> <p>d. Result in increased use of any energy source?</p> <p>e. Other: _____</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>10b</p>

10 b.) The local tax base would benefit by the transfer of the property into private ownership.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT
(Continued)

IMPACTS

Unknown*	No Significant Impacts	Minor Impacts*	Potentially Significant Impacts*	Can Impacts be Mitigated*	Comment Index
<p>11. <u>AESTHETICS/</u> <u>RECREATION</u></p> <p>Will the proposed action result in:</p> <p>a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?</p> <p>b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?</p> <p>c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational opportunities and settings?</p> <p>d. Other: _____</p>	<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>				

IMPACTS

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT
(Continued)

	Unknown*	No Significant Impacts	Minor Impacts*	Potentially Significant Impacts*	Can Impacts be Mitigated*	Comment Index
12. <u>CULTURAL/ HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u>						
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?	X					12a
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?	X					12b
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?	X					12c
d. Other: _____						

12 a,b &c) An assessment of cultural resources and possible impacts will be completed by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The SHPO findings and recommendations will be incorporated into the final EA draft. It is not anticipated that any cultural or historic resources will be impacted by this project.

**3. SIGNIFICANCE
CRITERIA**

IMPACTS

	Unknown*	No Significant Impacts	Minor Impacts*	Potentially Significant Impacts*	Can Impacts be Mitigated*	Comment Index
<p>13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u></p> <p>Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:</p> <p>a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)</p> <p>b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?</p> <p>c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?</p> <p>d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?</p> <p>e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?</p> <p>f. Other: _____</p>		<p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p> <p>X</p>				

Part III. Alternatives and Evaluation

1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

- A. No action - Would result in continued State liability for the property and continue the need for administrative oversight.
- B. Proceed as planned with the project - This will have the beneficial effects of eliminating the State's liability and administrative oversight of the property and increasing the local tax base by the property being in private ownership.

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

The transfer will have the beneficial impact of increasing the local government tax base.

3. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? YES / NO If an EIS is not required, explain why.

The EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

Because of the minor nature of the impacts associated with this project, and the beneficial outcome in allowing the State to absolve itself of the liability and administrative oversight responsibilities for this property.

4. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

The appropriate level of public involvement for this proposal is the distribution of the EA to those agencies, entities and individuals listed on the cover page. This is an appropriate level of public involvement considering the minor, non-significant impacts of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action.

5. Duration of comment period if any: Additional copies of the EA can be obtained from the address listed below. Comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., February 19 2001 and should be submitted to DNRC at the address listed below.

6. Name, title, addresses and telephone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

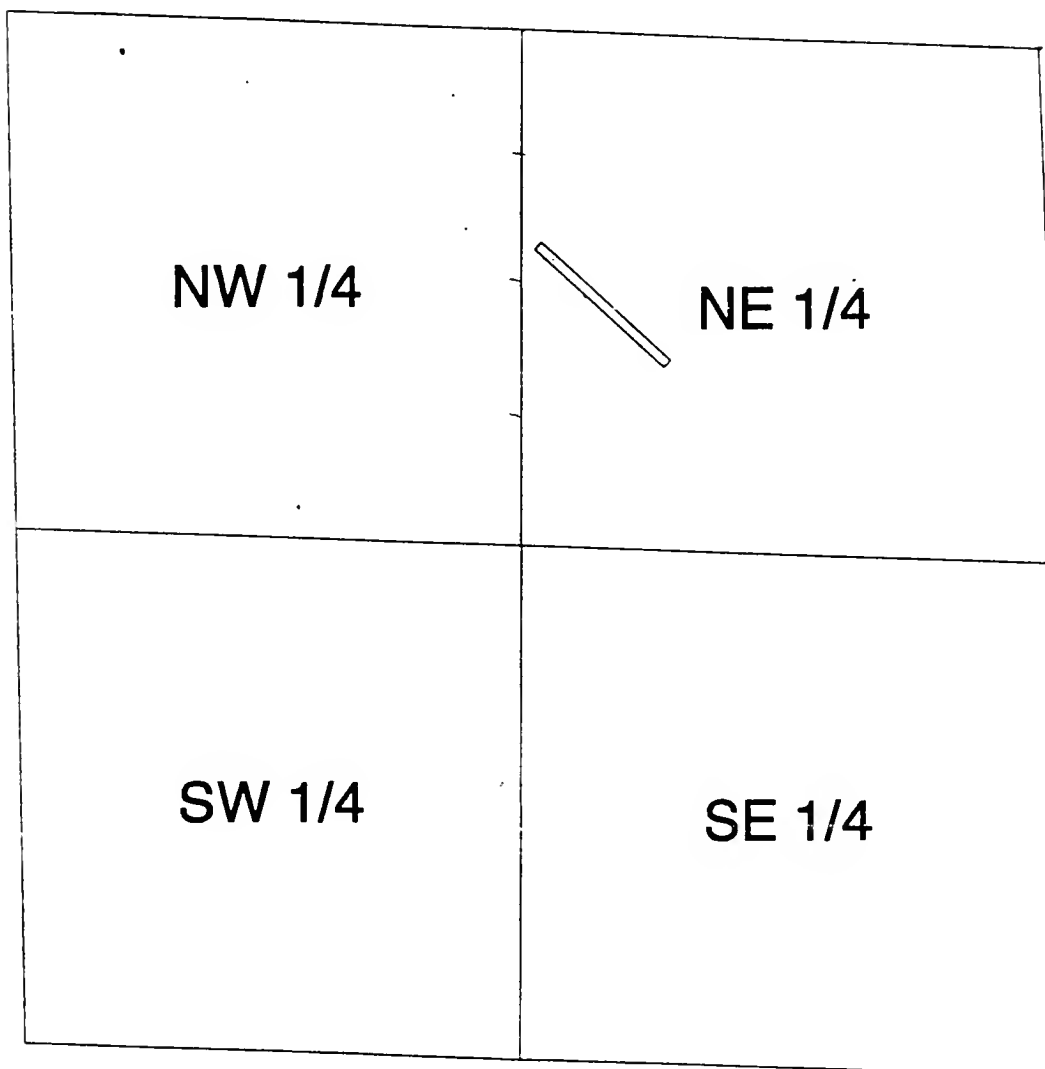
James P. Domino, Environmental Specialist, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Water Resources Division, State Water Projects Bureau, 48 N. Last Chance Gulch, P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601, (406) 444-6622. e-mail jdomino@state.mt.us

Part IV. Narrative Evaluation and Comment

The transfer as proposed will not have any significant impacts. The public benefits of eliminating the State's liability and administrative oversight responsibilities and the increase in the local tax base resulting from the transfer of the property to private ownership will offset any minor, non-significant impacts.

Township 14 North Range 27 East

Section 8

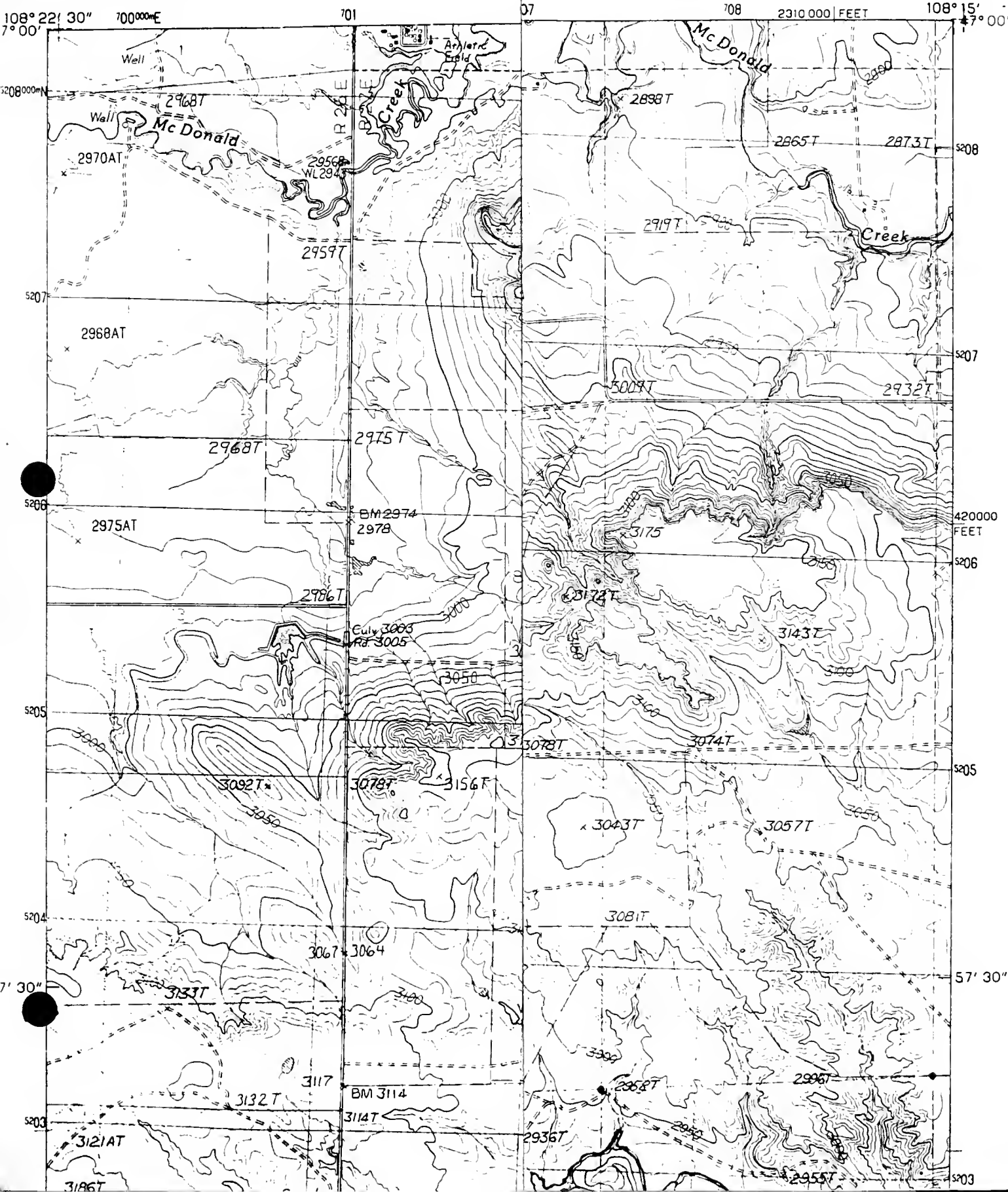


Petroleum County, Montana

Scale 1:12000

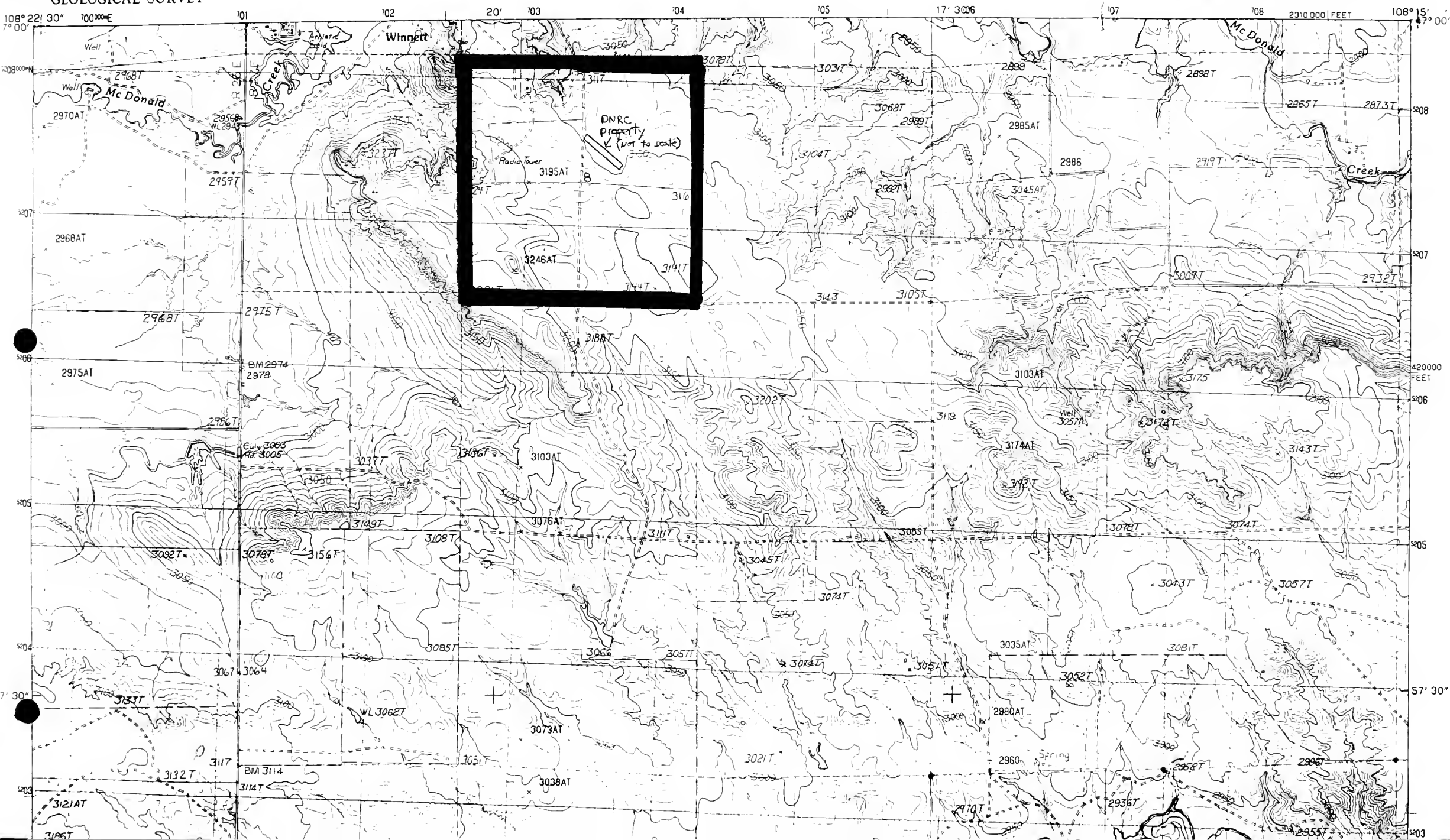
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

WINNETT SOUTH QUADRANGLE
MONTANA-PETROLEUM CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



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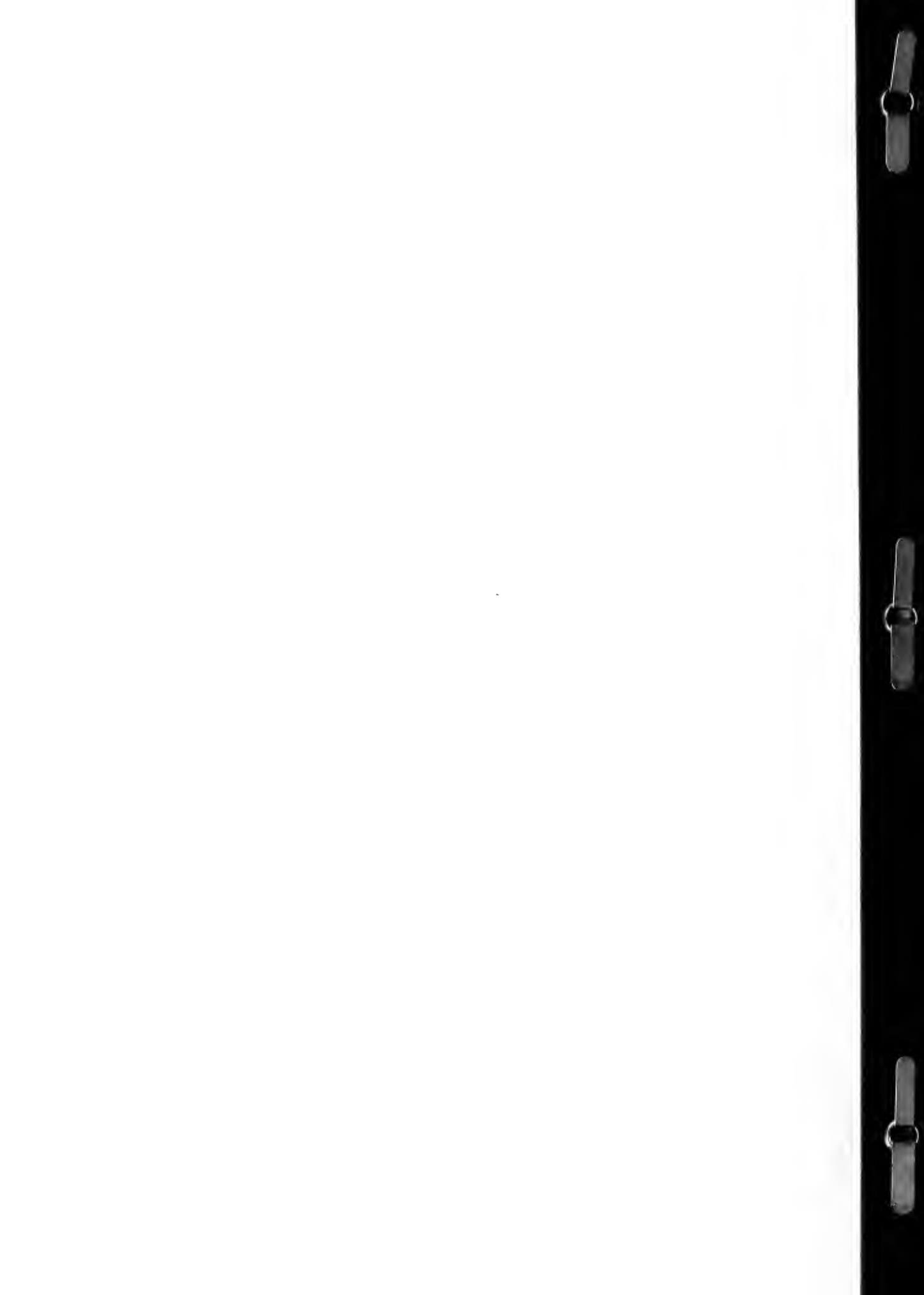


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